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THE DEVELOPMENT AND DEMONSTRATION OF A COORDINATED AND INTEGRATED PROGRAM OF OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION, SELECTION, AND PREPARATION IN A SECONDARY SCHOOL. FINAL REPORT.

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The objectives of this study were: (1) to develop and organize a coordinated program of vocational education which would include occupational information, selection, and preparation in the secondary school, (2) to use both individual and team-teaching techniques in the program, and (3) to give guidance in self-assessment by the students relative to their choice of a vocation. Paola High School was selected as the pilot center. Surveys were conducted to identify employment opportunities and the competencies required for 500 local occupations. On the basis of these surveys, instructional materials were developed for the junior year, "Commonalities in Occupations," and for the senior year, "Experiences in Occupations." These materials are included in Appendix A (VT 006 932). Data collection was by personal interviews and by questionnaires completed by graduating seniors. Within the 1967-68 junior class, 50 percent were enrolled in "Commonalities in Occupations." Eighty-five percent of students completing both years of the interdisciplinary program planned to work for the same employer in some capacity. Thirty-seven percent attended college and 26 percent attended trade school. Of those attending college or trade school, 82 percent used their senior year experience to finance education expenses. (CH)

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Kansas State University

Manhattan, Kansas

June 1968

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U. S. Department of
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I

INTRODUCTION

The Paola Pilot Project was designed to prepare youth in rural secondary schools for the world of work. The two year program provided general information required by all occupations and specific knowledge and training that was needed in the occupation selected by the student. Valuable assistance in curriculum planning came from a survey of employers and employees concerning available jobs in the community and the related skills and information required by that occupation.

The pilot project has provided the Paola community with an answer to their vocational training needs. Evaluations made by educators would indicate that many other communities may find their answer in the Paola Pilot Project.

PURPOSES

The basic purpose of this exemplary project was to demonstrate that through the function of guidance and cooperative efforts on the part of all vocational educators, an improved vocational program for youth could be attained.

The basic thesis advanced in this project was that the matter of occupational information, selection and preparation no longer fell within the province of a single vocational field, not even within the province of the several fields at the midpoint of the decades of the 1960's (cf. Haskew and Tumlin, 7 pp. 81 - 87). Rather, it was contended the problems of adequate occupational information, selection and preparation were the concern of persons represented by a broad spectrum of disciplines, which included sociology, psychology, vocational guidance, labor analysists, business analysists in addition to persons whose primary training and background were in vocational education.

Historically, vocational education has been organized and described in terms of its several branches or fields - - such as agricultural education, homemaking education, trades and industry education and distributive education. Even though a common thread of principles and practices permeated the gamut of all vocational fields, the distinctive characteristics of the program have tended in actual practice, to outweigh the common elements of the program.

Evidences of changes from this traditional point of reference of vocational education, however, are still emerging.

1) The Vocational Education Act of 1963 defines vocational education to mean, " . . vocational or technical training or retraining which is given in schools or classes (including field or laboratory work incidental thereto)

and is conducted as part of a program designed to fit individuals for gainful employment as semi - skilled or skilled workers or technicians in recognized occupations." Further in the same Section the Act provides that vocational education ". . includes vocational guidance and counseling in connection with such training, instruction related to the occupation for which the student is being trained or necessary for him to benefit from such training". . " (Section 8).

2) In 1943, the Forty - Second Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part 1, entitled Vocational Education, was published, and the major portion of this volume was devoted to descriptions of the several vocational fields. In 1965, the Sixty - Fourth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part 1, entitled Vocational Education, was published, and only a portion of one chapter was devoted to the several vocational fields, the remainder of the volume dealt with the common concerns of vocational education.

3) Evidences of the commonality of programs are to be found in the broad lists of principles of vocational education enunciated by Walsh and Selden (11 p. 92), and in the ten elements of "A Contemporary Design for Vocational Education", which emerged from an analysis of trends and concepts of vocational education, reported by Woerdehoff and others (12 pp. 62 - 64).

The central problem of this project was to translate the trends toward an interdisciplinary approach to vocational and technical education, to provide occupational preparation geared to the development and demonstrate a coordinated and integrated program of occupational information, selection and

preparation in a rural secondary school in Kansas.

Subsidary problems included the following: 1) The organization of a coordinated and integrated program in a secondary school. 2) The staffing of such a program, and the in - service training of the staff. 3) The development of appropriate plans of operation, curricula, operational procedures and resources, and evaluations. 4) The dissemination of results throughout the State and Nation.

OBJECTIVES

The major objective of the project was, "to develop and organize a coordinated program of vocational education to include: occupational information, selection and preparation for secondary school students". Much of the planning for a coordinated and integrated program of occupational preparation was based on a preliminary survey of actual employment opportunities in the vicinity of the high school selected as the demonstration center. The first step was to determine the nature and type of occupations of the employed in the area and the number of persons employed in each occupation. In a second step, intensive interviews were conducted to determine: a) the occupation in which the individual was employed, b) areas of general competencies needed by the workers and c) an evaluation made by the interviewee regarding the degree of competency needed in the particular occupation. This data provided information about employment opportunities and the needs expressed by workers for training which might be included in the coordinated and integrated instructional program. In addition, validation of the content of the

proposed course dealing with "common areas of learning", or "commonalities", in preparation for the world of work was sought by a statistical analysis of the findings from the second step.

The program presented elements of instruction common to all vocational fields to students headed for jobs and college. It taught the student how to evaluate occupations and themselves, and gave them an opportunity to study and observe on - the - job at least four occupations of their choice. Later they worked part - time so they could experience their occupational preference.

A second objective of the pilot project was to use both individual and team teaching techniques in offering the program. The participating vocational teachers lost their identities as teachers of specialized fields, and functioned as a team under the leadership of the coordinator. Teachers whose backgrounds were in agriculture, homemaking, distributive or trades and industrial education made their contributions to the program in terms of their special backgrounds and competencies and the needs of the individual student.

The third objective was to give guidance in self - assessment by the students relative to their choice of vocation. Each teaching team member had several students to advise, with the selection made according to the specific field in which the teacher was prepared.

The school counseling service was available for use of the student or the team of teachers. Career information and guidance materials such as test scores, personal data, self - inventories, etc., were utilized by the coordinating - teacher so that a realistic occupational selection could be made.

BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

Kansas is a rural agricultural state, similar to the other rural agricultural states that comprise the Midlands of America. Although the youth of these Midland states are not handicapped socially and economically in that: a) opportunities for preparation for gainful employment have been restricted largely to the preparation for the occupations of farming and homemaking, b) the seeking of employment opportunities requires out - migration, and there is evidence, according to studies such as the one reported by Gist, Pihlblad and Gregory (6) and Klineberg (9), that the more intelligent youth migrate unless, as has been pointed out by Zimmerman and Sorokin, (13), the youth are sons of relatively well to do farmers, c) despite reported evidence that the more intelligent, adventuresome youth migrate away from the rural areas, other evidence shows that, the out - migrated youth do not fare as well economically as youth reared in the urban areas, d) the school drop - out rate among rural youth is extremely high. As reported by McCormick (10), 25 of every 100 students who enroll in the first grade are not graduated from high school. Hence the "cream of the crop" in the rural areas tend to leave, the economic levels of employment for the youth who choose to remain are relatively low, and inadequate occupational preparation is not conducive to attracting industrial and technological development in the rural area.

In the way of research, Dr. R. J. Agan, principal investigator of the Paola Pilot Project, conducted these studies related to the problems of occupational preparation. In the first study, he found that employees, in general, expressed satisfaction with the competencies of graduates of programs of vocational education who were employed in agricultural occupations

other than farming (1) In the second study he found that there is a shortage of persons trained for agricultural occupations other than farming, and that employers interviewed indicated a need for expansions of programs of occupational preparation to prepare workers for the businesses that currently exist in rural Kansas (2). Dr. Agan and D. F. Showalter studied the attitudes of students enrolled in vocational agriculture programs and found that farm-reared boys have a highly inadequate and erronous conception of employment in urban areas (3).

Dr. Bernadine H. Peterson, along with T. K. Davis studied the twenty - six female home economics students at Paola High School between 15 and 20 years of age. They found that in 50 percent of the families studied both mates were employed. Fourteen out of 40 employed mates or 35 percent, commuted from their home community to their place of employment (5).

In a somewhat different vein, Dr. Peterson and T. M. Biesemier conducted an intensive study of women employed in occupations relating to clothing in another Kansas town, from which they were able to project curriculum needs in this area (4). The studies of Dr. Agan, Dr. Peterson, Biesemier and Davis pointed to the need for expanding programs of occupational preparation in Kansas schools.

A central steering committee was appointed in 1964 under the approval of the State Director of Vocational Education and included representatives of state supervisory and teacher education staffs in agricultural, home economics, distributive, and trades and industrial education to function

in program development in vocational education. The proposal leading to the operation and demonstration of the Paola Pilot Project emerged from the research done in Kansas and the efforts of the central steering committee.

METHODS

The first two steps in the Research Pilot Program in Vocational Education consisted of two surveys: 1) A survey of employment conditions and opportunities in Miami County, and 2) A survey of the activities and duties performed by a sample of 500 employees and competencies required and desirable in their respective occupations. Two research consultants and a team of four research workers, each a college graduate, conducted this phase of the research.

The current occupational status was obtained from the 1964 and 1965 high school graduates from Paola and nearby Osawatomie and Louisburg. The graduates from Paola High School in 1960 were contacted to determine what happened to a graduating class during a five - year period.

A basic concept of the project was that more emphasis should be given to vocational guidance. Therefore, the guidance follow - up was carried out by a team of teachers rather than one individual. The strong points and interests of each teacher were better utilized in the team approach in teaching the course units.

The two year course deals with "Commonalities in Occupations" the junior year and "Experiences in Occupations" the senior year. Units which have been developed for the junior year include those areas of information

which were felt to be common to all the traditional fields in vocational education. The specific units were: Vocational Guidance; Personal Health, Dress and Grooming at Work; Application, Interview and Follow - up; How to Study Occupations; Human Relations, Employer - Employee Relations; Safety Procedures, Habits, and Attitudes; Use of Graphic Representations at Work; Worker Benefits and Responsibilities; Money and Banking Services for Workers; Economic Concerns of Work; Principles of Business and Industrial Management; Agricultural Occupations; Trades and Industry Occupations; Home Economics Occupations; Distributive Occupations; Office Occupations; and Health Occupations.

COMMONALITIES IN OCCUPATIONS

The "Commonalities in Occupations" was first planned by the central committee to the project which included the Head Teacher Educators for each of the disciplines and the Head State Supervisors for each of the disciplines in vocational education working with the Kansas State Board for Vocational Education.

During the course which met one hour a day, each student had the opportunity to observe first hand at least four different occupations at specified intervals. The guidance counselor visited with each student in the "Commonalities in Occupations" class during the first few weeks of school to discuss with him a self - analysis or self - inventory that he had completed. The student decided on the first occupation that he desired to study and observe. Each student was assigned to a teacher of the project staff who had a background in the occupational area that the student observed. This helped the

students feel they had someone to advise them who was interested and could assist them with questions and problems during the exploratory experience and throughout the school year.

Each teacher worked with the same students on subsequent selections of occupations to observe. The coordinating - teacher used career information and guidance materials to help the student select a realistic occupation. After a student selected the occupation he wished to observe, he was required to make an intensive study of the occupation. The information sought included the duties, education and training, aptitudes and qualifications, employment opportunities, chances for advancement, working conditions, and income possibilities.

The coordinator located the firms or businesses suitable for the observations. With the approval and cooperation of the employer, plans were made to provide a realistic look at the occupation. Before observing the occupation, an application blank and personal data sheet were filled out. The employer was called for an interview appointment and the interview was made as if the student were actually applying for a job.

During the exploratory experience the student sought information about the occupation and recorded it on an "Exploratory Experience Evaluation" form.

The coordinator visited each employer after the exploratory period to collect an evaluation check list and discuss an evaluation of the student and the exploratory experience.

After the exploratory experience was completed, the student met with his coordinating teacher to discuss the observation and to evaluate himself in relation to the occupation. At this meeting the teacher had before him the "Employer's Evaluation" of the student. The teacher recorded significant information about the observation and the student so that it could be used again at a later date to help the student better understand himself.

EXPERIENCES IN OCCUPATIONS

Seniors who completed course requirements for the junior year "Commonalities in Occupations" were eligible to enroll in the senior year course. At the close of his junior year the student selected an occupation in which he had the greatest interest. The coordinator then located acceptable training stations based on the occupations selected by the students for a part - time job.

The student applied for the job and was interviewed by the employer. The student was required to acquire the job on his own rather than be placed in a particular job by the coordinator.

A training outline was planned by the coordinator and the employer for each student. The working hours were usually two or three hours each day, with the possibility of more hours on Saturdays or week - ends. Fifteen hours a week was the minimum a student must have worked. Both hours and wages conformed with the existing Labor Laws. The students turned in a time sheet each week to their coordinating teacher. The employer supervised work on the job and the coordinator supplied supervision from the school with

visits to the work station at certain intervals of time. The coordinator and teachers of the Pilot Project team were available for individual counseling with the students and for consultation in their related fields.

Each student was assigned to a teacher that had the interest and background in the vocational area of the part - time job. The teacher gave job - related assignments to the student each week. In many cases study guides were made available by cooperating occupational educational programs. If study guides were not available, the coordinator, employer, and coordinating teacher developed the instructional material and job - related assignments.

An evaluation of each student's performance on - the - job was obtained at the end of each nine weeks period. The coordinator provided the employer with an evaluation form. He explained the purpose of the form and left it with the employer to be completed at his convenience. The evaluation forms provided information concerning characteristics that were in need of improvement and that were worthy of praise. Signs of growth or changes of attitudes were also revealed by the evaluation.

COOPERATING SCHOOL

A study was made by the central committee of possible pilot center schools where the objectives of the proposal could be tested. The State Director of Vocational Education at that time, Director Thaine McCormick, in consultation with central committee members, indicated Paola, Kansas, as a possible site. Members of the central committee made an

on - site inspection and study of the Paola school, conferred with the school administration, studied records of the school and community and recommended to the research team that the center of Paola be proposed to the United States Office of Education as a pilot center to test the objectives of the plan.

Paola is one of three cities located in Miami County. The population of the three cities was approximately 10,000. A 1965 survey indicated that 66 percent of the 78 graduates were employed and that 85 percent of the 52 employed held jobs out of Miami County.

The Paola High School had an enrollment of about 300 students. The vocational program included only vocational agriculture and home economics, which was typical for most Kansas schools of this size. The school also offered courses in office education and industrial arts although they were not reimbursed.

Students in the pilot program were those who had successfully completed one or two years of vocational education in traditional programs of the high school and expressed an interest in preparing themselves for the world of work. They were normally 16 years of age or older and enrolled in a regular program of high school studies (including sciences, social studies, etc.) during the hours that they were not participating in the pilot project.

Instructional materials were developed by the research team, program coordinator, and the central committee based upon the findings of the study of the pilot center community. Much of the detailed work of instructional material construction was the responsibility of the principal investigator and the graduate assistants working with the program coordinator and teachers.

The research team called on various consultants and study committees to serve in an advisory capacity. The central committee functioned as an advisory group since the inception of the proposal for the project. Also, advisory to the research team was a citizens' committee which functioned in an advisory capacity to the school board of the pilot center school.

The pilot project's six instructors, coordinator and one Kansas State University graduate assistant participated in an eight week workshop in vocational education at Kansas State University during June and July of 1966, under the direction of Dr. R. J. Agan, principal investigator of the project. The workshop participants wrote a complete course of study for the pilot project, based upon an evaluation of the first year's operation.

A primary objective of the teachers in preparing the course of study manual was to be complete enough in the details of the lesson plans so that other teachers interested in replicating the common and interdisciplinary approach to vocational education in other schools would be able to do so. The lessons were developed entirely by the teachers who had one year of experience in the project.

During the 1968 spring semester, three Kansas State University graduate assistants revised the manual so that beginning teachers could be more effective in teaching the "Commonalities" course. The team of graduate assistants had backgrounds in vocational agriculture, industrial arts and social science. The team of teachers at the pilot center were asked to submit any changes they would make in their respective units in the course.

MATERIALS

In addition to the course of study manual developed by the project's team of teachers, reference bulletins from the Kansas State University Extension Service, companies and organizations were used in teaching the two year program. The Occupational Handbook, Dictionary of Occupational Titles, Handbook of Job Facts, Chronicle Briefs, Kansas Job Guides and numerous other occupational materials were available in the classroom.

Video - tape equipment was used through the cooperation of Kansas State University in developing instructional material. Video - taping of students in a variety of situations was done the first year of the project.

COLLECTION OF DATA

The major portion of data collected has been internal in nature. The coordinator conducted personal interviews with the parents and the part - time employers of the participating students. In addition, the students completed a questionaire at the end of their senior year in the program. The objectives of the interviews and questionaires were to: a) determine the benefits of the program, b) identify the strong and the weak points of the program, c) seek suggestions for improvements, d) identify growth and changes that may have developed in students as a result of the project, e) begin a follow - up of students' future plans, and f) get a comparison of occupations observed, part - time jobs and future occupational goals.

External evaluation came from a jury of specialists in education, vocational education and educational psychology. The program was also evaluated by the Mid - Continent Regional Educational Laboratory, the National Education Association and the Kansas State Teachers Association.

Results of the various evaluation devices may be found in the section titled "Findings and Analysis".

DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

Various vehicles were used to inform educators, businessmen and students about the philosophy, structure and benefits offered by the Paola Pilot Project. Visitors received a tour and explanation of the new approach to vocational education. Great emphasis was placed on panel discussions, exhibits and speeches at conventions, seminars and meetings. In addition, 19 newspaper, magazine, and journal articles were written and published.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The Paola Pilot Project was in operation three years. Enrollments, which were voluntary, (both years were on an elective basis) increased so that two sections of the eleventh year "Commonalities in Occupations" class were offered last year with 50 percent of the eleventh year class enrolled.

The employers who had provided training stations for the program were unanimous in encouraging the program to continue. The parents of the students, like the employers, were unanimous in responding that the program should be continued in the high school. An "excellent" classification was

given the program by 54 percent, "very good" by 12 percent, "good" by 15 percent, "fair" by 8 percent and none of the parents classified the program as "poor". Parents indicated in response to an open - ended question that the program had helped their child:

Gain maturity -- confidence

Learn to be tactful

Enjoy school more

Stay in school

Make the honor roll for the first time

Overcome bashfulness -- accept responsibility

Decide to go to college

Learn to budget money

Talk about careers

Eighty - five percent of the students who completed both years of the interdisciplinary program indicated that they planned to continue to work for the same employer in some capacity (permanently, summers, or after college and trade schools). Thirty - seven percent attended college and twenty - six of the graduates attended trade school. Eighty - two percent of those who attended college or trade school worked while in school using their senior year experiences to help finance education expenses.

The program evaluated by the Mid -Continent Regional Educational Laboratory was endorsed as one "overcoming many shortcomings of vocational - technical programs". The National Education Association and the Kansas State Teachers Association studied the program and selected the pilot project as one of the Demonstration Centers for the Year of the Non - Conference

sponsored by the Teacher Education and Professional Standards Commission of NEA.

An analysis of the total project was undertaken in April and May of 1968 when consultants, Dr. James B. Karnes and Dr. Perry Mock from Missouri, Dr. Bernadine H. Peterson of Wisconsin and Dr. Lloyd J. Phipps from Illinois were invited to the Paola High School to study and evaluate the project.

A resume condensed from the educators' evaluation reports indicated that all four agreed that the project appeared to be highly successful and must be continued in the Paola Secondary School. Other findings based on one or more of the evaluators' reports were as follows:

The exploratory experiences were of considerable value to the students because it started them thinking realistically about the need to select an occupational area and begin preparation for it. The exploratory phase of the "Commonalities in Occupations" course provided considerable motivation for the other more routine aspects of the course.

A significant and valuable aspect of the Paola Project was the effective use of the vocational teachers as team teachers in the "commonalities" course. The course of study was so developed to allow the team of teachers to utilize their strong points and interests.

Interest and motivation of the pupils and teachers involved in the project was high. There was excellent rapport between the staff and the community. The staff indicated willingness to work together for further improvement and the students exhibited a wholesome attitude when interviewed.

The Paola Project was designed to meed the needs of both the individuals and the community, thus aiding in the assurance of an adequate manpower supply. It also pointed up the feasibility of a vocational program for the smaller rural community. This project was flexible, adaptable, geared to technological change, designed to fit the individual for gainful employment and embraced all occupations.

Employers indicated overwhelmining community support of the program. One employer wrote: "This is one of the most realistic and down - to - earth vocational education and guidance programs that has been developed in many years of educational history." All respondents rated the program "good" or "very good".

Students indicated that they felt that a flexible observation experience would be desirable, permitting them to observe sometimes longer in one particular position and sometimes for a shorter period of time in other kinds of work. They felt that the longer observation of certain occupations should be permitted where greater interest lay or where there were many details which could not be observed in a standard length of time, and that a shorter period for observing in jobs where interest waned or where the observation could be accomplished in a shorter period of time would be desirable.

CONCLUSIONS.

In view of the enthusiastic support for the "commonalities" program in Paola by the school's administration, teachers and students, by the parents, businessmen and community, certain conclusions are quite evident.

One indication of success was the very high percentage of pupils in the eleventh year program who continued in the program at the twelfth grade. The school administration considers the new vocational program to be an essential segment of the secondary school's offering. Therefore, the school district will continue to operate the "commonalities" program essentially as it was when federally funded. This fact appears to provide evidence that the project was effectively planned and well conceived to meet the needs of the students and the community.

The exploration of occupations at the eleventh year made the student's choice of vocational courses more realistic and gave added meaning to non - vocational courses which resulted in an increase in motivation of the student for all school work.

The program appeared to raise the status of vocational education in the school and tended to increase the percentage of pupils systematically preparing for the world of work.

The Paola Pilot Project has much to offer our nation's youth, the secondary schools and their communities. Dr. Karnes pointed out in his evaluation report what he concluded to be the desirable aspects of the project:

The Paola Pilot Project has many desirable features, some of which parallel the traditional cooperative part - time training programs found in public schools throughout the country. However, it has some decided advantages over a regular cooperative program. The project encompasses a broader spectrum of the occupational field including progessional level occupations, which are not permitted to be trained for in reimbursable cooperative training programs.

A unique feature of the project utilizes a very desirable system of acquainting the students with occupations so that they are studied in depth or levels of jobs in an occupation as well as breadth of related families before the student is asked to make a choice with regard to his work experience. Particularly valuable in this program is the opportunity for the student to observe or explore a variety of occupations as well as various levels before he makes such a choice. In today's world of work this is extremely helpful for most students do not get involved in experiences of this nature except by accident. It is virtually impossible for young people to learn about occupations through their normal everyday activities, and in a sense the traditional ways of learning about occupations which has been present in past generations is no longer available for most young people. This simply means that the world of work no longer provides a "school" in which the youngsters may become acquainted with various occupations, except in those jobs which lend themselves well to part - time work experience, and young people normally enter them. Such jobs, of course, are often times unfortunately dead end jobs for most of the students, and if they are to aspire to the level in the labor force which is to be commensurate with their capabilities, they must have some special means of getting acquainted with the opportunities available for them. There is little or no room to enter jobs any more without special preparation, and without much study of the occupations involved. Students are often found floundering for years without coming upon a realistic and meaningful system of entering into the labor force in a worthwhile and economically as well as socially beneficial position.

The Paola Pilot Project has taken a great stride in enabling the rather small school system with an enrollment around 500 in the high school to capitalize on the opportunities available in the community to acquaint students with occupations and provide students initial experiences in occupations of interest and in some cases provide them the basic skills and background followed by experience and entrance into these occupations and progressing in them.

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